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CPW Report No. 34 -- USSR

(Apr. 29 - May 12, 1952)

SUMMARY

May Day, the State loan, Radio Day and Victory Day--all of them still heavily publicized--account for the bulk of the central and regional transmissions. Discussion of Radio Day is familiarly phrased to present both wireless and television as exclusively Russian developments wrongly claimed by the capitalist West. Victory Day is similarly treated as an all-Soviet affair, while within the Soviet orbit itself most of the credit for the victory in the last war goes to the Great Russian people.

There is virtually no discussion of ideological themes beyond a few incidental references to them in different contexts. As is usual during periods preceding and immediately following national holidays, industrial and other failings are de-emphasized while much stress is laid on the overall picture of solid achievements. The report on Kazakhstan's plan performance for the first quarter of this year shows that the production of some foodstuffs and other consumer goods is far behind the plan, while the output of heavy industry is generally in excess of the fixed targets.

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STATE LOAN

"A Brilliant Success": Much of the discussion of the recently-floated State loan centers on the voluntary nature of the subscriptions and the enthusiasm of the subscribers. Although everyone is urged to subscribe "at least three to four weeks' earnings," there is no inkling about propaganda, social, or other pressures employed in connection with the drive. There is some reference to direct individual benefits that will be derived from subscriptions to the loan but most of the emphasis is on the collective welfare--in the future. Thus the entire loan, it is claimed, will be used "to improve the cultural and material conditions" of the people, to expand capital investment and raise the standard of living in general.

Included in the subscription campaign is the invariable element of peace. The latter is treated inferentially, mostly in juxtaposition with government loans in capitalist countries which are said to serve the dual purpose of robbing the workers and stepping up the "mad armament race." The "brilliant success" (blestiaschchiy uspek) characterizing the current subscription campaign is also referred to as another step toward peace and prosperity at a time when the "enslaving" nature of capitalist loans are inevitably leading to aggressive wars. Prof. Lubimov "proves" this point in his IZVESTIA article on May 6 (Home Service) by quoting a Swedish military expert who said that "state indebtedness ... is a sad memorial of past wars and a presage of the wars to come"

RADIO DAY

A Russian-Soviet Holiday: Radio Day receives great attention on practically all transmitters. At least two sources still betray a certain amount of sensitivity on the moot question of the origin of radio. In an anonymous talk from Vinnitsa (May 7) the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA is called a "liar and falsifier of history" for crediting Marconi with the invention of radio which "justly belongs" to the Great Russian scientist, Popov. The American Federal Communications Commissions is similarly berated for claiming that the radiotelephone was first used in the U.S. in 1882, 13 years before Popov's alleged invention of wireless:

... it was on May 7, 1895, that the Russian scientist, Alexander S. Popov, demonstrated the first radio receiver in the world No amount of lies can change the fact that the inventor was A. S. Popov, the Great Russian scientist.

Yerashenko, broadcasting from Orel (May 6), says that the American dealers who proposed to Popov to sell them his invention were rebuffed in no uncertain terms by the Great Russian patriot:

I am a Russian ... I am proud that I was born a Russian, and if not our contemporaries then maybe our descendants will understand how great is my allegiance to my Fatherland.

Neither radio nor television--which, incidentally, is also claimed as Russian invention--could have been developed to its present stage of perfection without the familiar "solicitude" for that branch of science on the part of the Party and the Soviet Government. Worth recalling, in this connection, is a radio skit based on the alleged meeting of Popov and Marconi transmitted by Radio Moscow in May, 1949. Rebuked by the Russian for having stolen his patent on wireless transmission, Marconi was portrayed as feeling embarrassed and unable to find an answer.

PRAVDA (May 7) takes the occasion to remind the communications and other related industries as well as the Industrial Cooperatives that they are not doing all they should do to promote the radiofication of the country, particularly the rural areas. In Sverdlov Oblast, says the paper, the number of "radio points" (radiotочки) has actually decreased. The trouble with the radio industry, it is claimed, is that the production of such parts as loudspeakers, tubes, and relay cables (radio-translatsionnye linii) does not keep up with the output of the other components. In the rural areas, the distribution of radio-listening points is said to be far behind the demands of the population.

The familiar serious shortcomings are pointed out in the performance of the radio broadcasting stations and industry of Kirov and Chita Oblasts, Krasnoyarsk Krai, and the Tatar Autonomous Republic. The vulnerable spots in those areas, it is asserted, "are still hidden behind ostensibly safe average figures" (skryvayutsia eshche za blagopoluchnymi srednimi tsiframi) at a time when immediate attention and action are required.

Television, the paper implicitly admits, is still in its initial stage of development but speedier progress should be encouraged. Moscow and Leningrad are said to be the only present sources of Soviet televised transmission, and the station built in Kiev is scheduled to go into operation in the near future. The present task of the television industry, the editorial concludes, is to "master the technique of color television" (osvaivat tsvetnoye televidenie), improve the general quality of television, and lengthen its transmission distance.

Communications Minister Psurtsev says (May 7) that the performance of the various enterprises of the Communications Industry "calls for a serious reprimand" (Zasluzhivayut seryoznykh upryokov). The demand for loud-speakers and other means of sound amplification is not being met, and that makes it impossible to operate many radio stations at full capacity. The production of tubes, cables, and other parts for relay stations is still unsatisfactory, according to the Minister. That is why a number of stations built last year have been unable to begin operation, and many people are "deprived of the possibility" (lisheny vozmozhnosti) of listening to radio programs.

RADYANSKA UKRAINA (May 7) says that although the number of Ukrainian radio stations has trebled and their power increased five-fold in the postwar period, there are still a number of weak spots in the wireless industry of which the production of loudspeakers and other parts is one, and the planned installation of new radio facilities is another:

There are serious claims to be made against the Republic's industrial organizations, the enterprises of the Ministry of Local Industries of the Ukrainian SSR and the Ukrainian reproducers and radio spare parts.

Transcarpathian, Kamenets-Podolsk, Volyn, Droghobych, and Lvov Oblasts are said to be the slowest in the Ukraine, having fulfilled their plans for installation of radio facilities by only 50 percent.

The technical deficiencies of the Ukrainian radio, the paper implies, are no excuse for the low ideological level of its transmissions. And it is to this aspect of radio performance that all the Party Committees concerned are urged to give their concentrated attention. The Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party is reported to have noted that the ideological, cultural, and educational level of the radio programs is "lagging behind" the Communist education of the workers. The Republican and oblast radio committees are not broadcasting sufficient material on the Marxist-Leninist theory or the achievements of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. The musical and literary broadcasts "are uniform, uninteresting, and their themes are limited." Another fault of the Ukrainian radio, according to the paper, is what might be construed as lack of adulation for the Great Russian people:

Every method of ideological work must be employed to publicize and to explain to the workers that for their great successes in economic and cultural development the Ukrainian people are obligated to the Bolshevik Party, Comrade Stalin, and their elder brother, the Great Russian people.

Ukrainian version:

Vsima zasobami ideologichnoy roboty treba nevpynno propaguvaty i rozyasnuvaty trudiashchim, shcho svoimy velycheznymy uspihkamy v khospodarskomu i kulturnomu bodovnitstvi ukrainski narod zobov'yazovany bilshovitskoy partii, tovarishevi Stalinu, svoemu starshomu bratu, velykomu rossiyskomu narodovi.

Moscow is the world's largest radio center, and its broadcasts are carried in 70 languages of the peoples of the USSR and many foreign languages, according to ZARYA VOSTOKO (May 7). The Georgian SSR radio, however, is not in step with current wireless development and, continues the paper, "there is no need to prove" its many deficiencies. There is no further amplification of this point, however.

Stalino Oblast broadcasts, in the opinion of SOTSIALISTICHESKIY DONBAS (May 7), are also "trailing behind" the ever-growing cultural requirements of the workers, which is another way of referring to poor quality. Serious shortcomings still characterize the entire oblast broadcasting system, including the technical end of it: "We still have villages and kolkhozes which do not possess radio substations." The only word descriptive of the ideological content and clearness of transmission of many of the radio stations, the paper concludes, is "faulty."

PRAVDA and some of the regional transmitters urge more attention and assistance to radio amateurs (radiolubiteli) who, they claim, could do much more toward popularizing radio technique among the population if radio parts were available to them. A report from Kishinev, Moldavian SSR (May 8) mentions the All-Union radio amateurs' contest recently held in that city: "Amateurs who obtain the highest number of contacts with amateurs in other Soviet Republics and in the People's Democratic Republics will win the contest."

The radio amateurs in Dnepropetrovsk Oblast, ZARYA admits editorially (May 7), are not given a fair chance. Their activities are greatly hampered by the lack of parts, and local radiofication is therefore progressing very slowly. The situation is "much worse" in the rural areas. The same paper reveals that radiofication work normally done by professional technicians--as distinguished from the "voluntary" work of the amateurs--is also "far from satisfactory." Apostolovskiy, Mezhevskiy, and Vasilokivskiy Rayons are mentioned as the slowest in the oblast because their radio centers "are not used in a rational way." Thus it is claimed that the oblast miners "are deprived of the possibility" of listening to the town networks while the city inhabitants cannot listen to broadcasts from the mines. Besides, the quality of the transmissions often fails to satisfy the listeners.

VICTORY DAY

A Soviet Holiday: The large volume of broadcast material on Victory Day (den pobedy) hardly varies in tone and phraseology from the PRAVDA editorial (May 9) devoted to that occasion. The radio and press treatment of the subject is such as to convey the idea that the victory in the last war was scored by Soviet arms exclusively, and Victory Day is therefore a national holiday of the USSR. There is no mention of the Western, or any other, Allies as having even participated in the war. Any references to them that do occur are in disparaging terms, familiarly slanted to give the impression that the USSR's enemies of today were also her potential enemies during the last war. Indeed it would not be difficult to conclude, on the basis of these none-too-subtle allusions, that the U.S., Great Britain, France, and the other capitalist countries were actually a part of the fascist alliance fighting against the USSR.

More outspoken about the prevailing line than the others, in this connection, is Gen. Kuznetsov in his PRAVDA article of May 9 (not broadcast). By its attack on the USSR, says the General, Hitlerite Germany merely "acted as the front-line detachment" (vystupala v kachestve peredovogo otriada) of world imperialism, headed by U.S., in its general assault on the Soviet State and its people. The current American and British "intensive preparations" (usilennaya podgotovka) for a new war, the General intimates, can only be explained by the fact that they "apparently ... did not benefit by the lesson of the Second World War" (kak vidno ... ne izvlekli urokov iz vtoroy mirovoy voyny ...) The General's unmistakably belligerent tone is finally raised to a pitch of defiance, as he puts the finishing touches on the somber picture of the bourgeois world:

There is no doubt that the third World War, should the imperialists succeed in unleashing it, will sound the death-knell ... of the whole world imperialism.

Russian version:

Net somnenia, chto tretya mirovaya voyna, esli imperialistam udastsya razvyazat eyo, yavitsya mogiloy ... dlia vsego mirovogo imperializma.

The Western Allies are again inferentially lumped with Hitlerite Germany in Kuznetsov's reference to the technical aspect of the last war. It should be pointed out, he says, that the Soviet military equipment was qualitatively superior to that of Germany, the United States, and Great Britain.

RADYANSKA UKRAINA (May 9) declares that the USSR and the U.S. are poles apart but emphasizes, quoting Stalin, that war is no nearer now than it was a year or two ago despite the frenzied efforts of the West to precipitate it. Like in most of the emissions on the occasion, full credit for the victory in World War II goes to the Soviet people, with the Great Russians claiming the lion's share of it, because of their "outstanding personal qualities" and general superiority over the other Soviet nationalities.

INDUSTRY

Kazakh Industry: Success and Failure: Out of the 64 items listed in Kazakhstan's quarterly production report 23 show below-plan performance. The Republic's lumber industry is far down on the list of industrial production with a quarterly performance of 53 percent of the plan. That industry's weakness, incidentally, is also revealed in the 1952 quarterly reports for the RSFSR (79 percent), Armenian SSR (average 85 percent) and the USSR as a whole (86 percent). With the exception of the textile industry which shows consistent plan fulfillment, a number of essential consumer goods are just as consistently short of their targets, among them fish, meat and dairy products, bricks and other building materials, leather footwear, and crockery. The output of heavy industry, on the other hand, such as coal, oil, steel, and others is in excess of the planned figures.

RABOCHYI PUT (Smolensk, May 8) insists that the twin evils of poor construction quality and high building costs must be eliminated once and for all. The three methods suggested by the editorial to achieve better results are better labor organization, the introduction of the conveyor-belt system wherever possible, and close contact between the building officials and the workers. There is no reference to any particular organization or area within Smolensk Oblast. Lack of foresight on the part of industrial and agricultural officials of Rostov Oblast is charged by a MOLOT editorial on May 8 which points out that it is just this short-sighted attitude that is responsible for the unsatisfactory progress in the construction of the oblast irrigation network (Rostov-Don Vodstroy). The paper urges "higher demands" (bolshie trebovaniya) on economic management, and such demands, it says, can only be met when the leading officials "study economics more thoroughly" and put their administrative affairs in order. Letting things drift is one objectionable habit of some officials, and "self-complacency, placidity and conceit" aroused by the slightest success is another.

IZVESTIA (May 8) is somewhat less circumspect in its reference to economic and Soviet management. According to the Soviet version of "checks and balances" suggested by the paper, it is not enough to have leading officials check the performance of their subordinates. Leading cadres, says the paper, must in turn be "checked from below," and Stalin is quoted as the exponent of that line: "When the masses ... check on their leaders they, too, notice defects and suggest methods for their rectification."

STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 29) darkly refers to the "many obstacles" that are placed in the way of industrial innovators and rationalizers who are endeavoring to improve production. The "superciliously-careless attitude" (barski-prenebrezhitelnoye otnosheniya) displayed by the management of such enterprises as the Stalingrad ship wharf (sudoverf) and tractor plant toward the proposals submitted by the innovators and rationalizers, the paper asserts, is tantamount to resisting improvement. Unfortunately, the paper continues, the mentioned two enterprises are not the only ones where "formalism and bureaucracy" stand in the way of progress. New ideas and methods designed to improve production are often disregarded for long periods of time, and sometimes shelved and forgotten. Both the Party and trade union organizations are told that they are not entirely guiltless in regard to the "bureaucratic procrastination" that characterizes the behavior of many plant managers and other industrial officials.

Labor Recruitment: Systematic large-scale labor recruitment by the Labor Reserves Ministry for work "away from home" is indicated in reports from Sumy, Stavropol, and Drogobych (all May 8). Among the destination places mentioned are the construction sites of the Donets Basin, the Urals, Siberia, Chechen and Molotov Oblasts, and "elsewhere." Specialists of "all kinds," mechanics and unskilled workers are urged to apply for details to the various recruitment offices.

MISCELLANEOUS

The fight against malaria in Armenia is practically won, according to Agopyan of the Armenian Public Health Ministry (May 11). The sharp drop in malaria incidence--now only 10 percent of the 1940 figure--is reported to have been achieved by large-scale swamp-drainage work (gidro-meliorativnye raboty), DDT and other complex anti-malaria measures developed by the Armenian Parasitology Institute.

The largest network of high-voltage cables supplying power to the European part of the USSR, says a Home Service report on May 5, will form the following "closed triangle" between Stalingrad, Moscow, and Kuibyshev.

A TASS report from Yakutsk (May 5) says that a new type of bacteria, Azoto-Bakterin, has been developed by the local branch of the Academy of Sciences. The Yakut scientists, says the report, have found that the proximity of the permafrost stratum prevented the rapid decomposition of fertilizers in the ground, the nitrogen absorbed from the soil by plants was not retained and the soil became more barren from year to year. As a local variety of bacteria, Azoto-Bakterin is said to be the answer to the problem of retaining soil fertility since it is perfectly suited for local conditions.